Bizarre Twist in Missing Spy Case

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Briton Accused of Duping Wife of Soviet Defector

NICHOLAS SHADRIN
. . . vanished in Vienna

By Greg Walter
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LONDON—At 10:58 on the morning of Aug. 5, 1977, the telephone rang in the Covington & Burling law offices of Richard D. Copaken in Washington.

"I've just returned from Germany," said an apparently British voice on the other end of the line, "and I understand you are looking for Nicky Artamonov."

That call from a man who identified himself only as "Benson" launched a bizarre six-month odyssey for Copaken and for the wife of Nikolai Artamonov, also known as Nicholas George Shadrin, a Soviet defector who disappeared on an intelligence mission in Vienna on Dec. 20, 1975.

In the end, that search—inspired by what appears to be an intricate web of lies woven by a master con artist—would prove both heartbreaking and expensive for Blanka Ewa Shadrin, who, according to Copaken, has spent life savings totaling $122,000 in search of her husband.

Strands of that web surfaced in a south London courtroom earlier this month where 44-year-old William Joseph Flynn was charged with obtaining money by deception and ordered held without bail for a trial to be staged sometime early next year.

In that morning telephone call in August 1977, "Benson" admitted that he was using a phony name for his own protection. But—according to a memorandum written later by Copaken—the caller had learned of the lawyer's search for Shadrin through an article the previous month in the international edition of Newsweek.

Identifying himself as a former British agent anxious to help find Shadrin, "Benson" suggested that Copaken place the following advertisement in the International Herald Tribune:

"Harry wants bank notes of 17th century origin" followed by the number of an unlisted telephone Copaken was to have installed in his office.

There was a "50-50 chance," said Benson, that a man named "Agnew" would see the advertisement and respond.

"Agnew" was a "mercenary character" said Benson, distastefully, but could help locate Shadrin since he had supplied the missing agent with false documents in Zurich six days after Shadrin disappeared in Vienna.

Benson warned Copaken that Agnew would probably hang up since Benson could not provide Copaken

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